

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 6832

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TAGS: MARR, PFOR, SP, US

SUBJ: SPANISH BASE NEGOTIATIONS AND OFFICIAL US REACTION TO
EXECUTIONS OF SPANISH TERRORISTS

SUMMARY: MEDIA REACTION HERE TO OFFICIAL US STATEMENTS ON THE
RECENT EXECUTION OF TERRORISTS AND THEIR POSSIBLE RELATION TO THE
BASE NEGOTIATIONS HAS LARGELY BEEN QUITE STRAIGHTFORWARD THUS FAR.
HOWEVER, FOREIGN MINISTRY UNDER SECRETARY ROVIRA HAS RAISED A
QUESTION ABOUT AN AP REPORT PRUPOTING TO REFLECT THE SECRETARY'S
VIEWS. END SUMMARY.

1. REPORTS OVER RECENT DAYS OF THE SEVERAL STATEMENTS BY WHITE
HOUSE AND DEPT SPOKESMEN AND BY A "SENIOR AMERICAN OFFICIAL"
CONCERNING EXECUTION OF 5 SPANISH TERRORISTS AND THE QUESTION OF
THE CLOSE COINCIDENCE IN TIMING OF AN IMMINENT AGREEMENT ON US
BASES IN SPAIN HAVE, FOR THE MOST PART, BEEN REPORTED WITHOUT
COMMENT IN THE SPANISH MEDIA.

2. THE ONLY INDICATION OF ANY SPANISH GOVERNMENT CONCERN ABOUT
THESE STATEMENTS WAS PROVIDED BY FOREIGN MINISTRY UNDER SECY
ROVIRA ON OCT 2 DURING CALL BY DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECY LAINGEN
AND THE CHARGE. ROVIRA MADE A POINT OF HANDING OVER COPIES
OF AN AP STORY DATED SEPT 30 FROM THE UN BY DENNETH
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FREED. THIS STORY HAS A "SENIOR AMERICAN OFFICIAL" REPORTING

THAT THE SECRETARY DID EXPRESS AMERICAN CONCERN OVER THE SPANISH EXECUTIONS TO CORTINA DURING THEIR MEETING ON SEPT 30, NOT IN TERMS OF HUMAN RIGHTS OR MORAL ISSUES BUT IN TERMS OF THE POSSIBLE ISOLATION OF SPAIN AND THE RESULTING DANGER OF WESTERN EUROPEAN SECURITY. THIS ASPECT OF THE REPORT AND ITS REFERENCES TO THE WHITE HOUSE SPOKESMAN'S STATEMENT OF THE PRESIDENT'S VIEWS ON SEPT 29 (REGRET AT THE "CYCLE OF VIOLENCE" AND THE VIEW THAT THE BASE NEGOTIATIONS ARE "ENTIRELY SEPARATE" FROM THE EXECUTIONS) ARE WIDELY REFLECTED IN THE REPORTING CONTAINED IN SPANISH MEDIA. HOWEVER, THE FREED STORY GOES FURTHER THAN HAVE SPANISH REPORTERS IN ADDING THAT "KISSINGER WAS SAID TO FEEL THAT THE EXECUTIONS CAME AT A BAD TIME REGARDING THE BASE NEGOTIATIONS. THE SENIOR OFFICIAL SAID THERE WAS NO CHANCE AN AGREEMENT WOULD BE REACHED AT KISSINGER'S MEETING WITH CORTINA, ALTHOUGH THERE MIGHT BE SOME PRELIMINARY UNDERSTANDING ANNOUNCED CONCERNING GOALS TO BE WORKED OUT IN LATER TALKS. WHATEVER AGREEMENT IS REACHED ON THE BASES DOES NOT MEAN THE UNITED STATES SUPPORTS THE FRANCO REGIME, THE AMERICAN OFFICIAL SAID, BUT IT WILL ALLOW THE UNITED STATES TO KEEP A STRATEGIC FORCE IN A REGION WHERE WESTERN EUROPEAN SECURITY HAS BEEN WEAKENED BY THE COMMUNIST THREAT IN PORTUGAL AND THE GREEK-TURKISH CONFLICT OVER CYPRUS." (THE ONLY SUGGESTION IN THE SPANISH PRESS TO DATE THAT THE FAILURE OF THE TWO FOREIGN MINISTERS TO INITIAL AN AGREEMENT ON SEPT 30 WAS RELATED TO THE EXECUTIONS IS CONTAINED IN AN ACCOUNT BY "YA" CORRESPONDENT GUSTAVO VALVERDE OF THE SAME DATE WHICH CLAIMS IT WAS BEING SAID IN THE STATE DEPT THAT AN AGREEMENT ON EXTENSION MIGHT NOT BE ANNOUNCED PUBLICLY BECAUSE OF THE WESTERN EUROPEAN REACTION TO THE EXECUTIONS.)

3. ROVIRA POINTEDLY ASKED FOR ANY INFORMATION REGARDING THE SUBSTANCE OF HE FREED ARTICLE. THE CHARGE RESPONDED THAT WE WERE ONLY AWARE OF WHAT WE HAD SEEN IN THE PRESS ON THIS MATTER ALTHOUGH WE DID OF COURSE HAVE THE FULL TEXT OF THE PREVIOUS STATEMENT BY THE WHITE HOUSE SPOKESMAN.

4. IN A BRIEF EXCHANGE, THE CHARGE POINTED OUT THAT IT SEEMED IMPORTANT TO ESTABLISH THAT THE GOS WAS DEALING WITH ACTS OF TERRORISM, NOT SIMPLE POLITICAL ACTS. HE CAUTIONED THAT IN TAKING THE BASE AGREEMENT BEFORE CONGRESS, WE COULD EXPECT TO BE PUERIED CONFIDENTIAL

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IN DEPTH REGARDING THE CIVIL RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS OF THE EXECUTIONS EVEN THOUGH THESE MIGHT BE CONSIDERED INTERNAL SPANISH CONCERNS THE QUESTION OF DUE PROCESS MIGHT BE THE CENTRAL ONE. ROVIRA CLEARLY UNDERSTANDS THIS WELL. HE INDICATED SOME THOUGHT HAD ALREADY BEEN GIVEN TO THE PREPARATION OF A WHITE PAPER AND NOTED THAT THE FOREIGN MINISTRY'S CONCERN WAS REFLECTED IN THE SENDING OF AN OBSERVER TO THE RECENT TRIALS IN BURGOS SO THAT THE MINISTRY COULD BETTER RESPOND TO QUESTIONS REGARDING TRIAL PROCEDURE.

HE HAD NOT YET SUCCEEDED IN PERSUADING HIS SUPERIORS THAT FOREIGN EMBASSIES IN MADRID AS WELL AS SPANISH EMBASSIES ABROAD SHOULD BE GIVEN THE RESULT OF THIS REPORT. THEIR RELUCTANCE APPARENTLY RESULTED FROM THEIR CONSIDERING THIS TO BE AN INTERNAL MATTER. THE CHARGE INDICATED THAT IT WOULD BE HELPFUL TO US TO HAVE SUCH INFORMATION.

5. THIS FAR THERE HAVE BEEN FEW SOUR NOTES HERE IN THE LARGELY MATTER

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OF-FACT REPORTING OF THE US POSITION ON THE EXECUTIONS AND THEIR POSSIBLE RELATION TO THE BASE NEGOTIATIONS. A CONTRAST HAS BEEN DRAWN IN SOME REPORTS BETWEEN THE RESTRAINED NATURE OF US OFFICIAL COMMENT AND WHAT ARE SEEN AS EXAGGERATED REPORTS IN MUCH OF THE US PRESS. THE NATIONAL MOVEMENT'S DAILY "ARRIBA", IN REPORTING THE SECRETARY'S EXPRESSION OF CONCERN TO CORTINA, CLAIMS WASHINGTON SUPPORT FOR SPAIN'S ANTI-TERRORIST POLICY RESULTING FROM ITS OWN TERRORIST PROBLEMS AND THAT THIS, AS WELL AS THE BASE NEGOTIATIONS, EXPLAINS THE RESTRAINED OFFICIAL US REACTION TO THE EXECUTIONS. REPORTS ON THE LAST MEETING BETWEEN THE SECRETARY AND CORTINA (SEPT 30) UNANIMOUSLY SHOW CONTINUED OPTIMISM THAT AGREEMENT WILL BE REACHED SOON, THIS BASED PRINCIPALLY ON CORTINA'S OWN COMMENT TO THE PRESS AFTER THE MEETING.
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